

How to use SDL_bgi in Python programs

Please make sure that you installed the SDL_bgi binaries for your platform, as described in `INSTALL_Python.md`, before proceeding.

Implementation Details

SDL_bgi is written in C, and its Python bindings are implemented via the [ctypes](#) library. In general:

- functions in Python have the same name as their C counterparts;
- constants and enums are implemented as variables;
- standard C types (`int`, `float`, `char *`, etc.) are mapped to Python types;
- structs are available as `ctypes` classes that have the same name and field names.

For example:

C struct	Python class
<pre>----- struct arccoordstype { int x; int y; int xstart; int ystart; int xend; int yend; };</pre>	<pre>----- class arccoordstype (Structure): _fields_ = [("x", c_int), ("y", c_int), ("xstart", c_int), ("ystart", c_int), ("xend", c_int), ("yend", c_int)]</pre>

There are minor differences explained below.

Syntax differences

`ctypes` implements new types that are mapped to equivalent Python types; for example, `c_int` is equivalent to `int`. Please refer to `ctypes`' [Reference](#).

2D arrays can be implemented via [Numpy](#); please see for example `demo/life.py` or `demo/buffers_numpy.py`. Strictly speaking, Numpy is not required; but working with arrays without it is a pain.

Memory buffers, used for example by `getimage()` or `getbuffer()`, are implemented using function `create_string_buffer()`.

The `byref()` function can be used to pass variables by reference, as in the following functions:

```
# void detectgraph (int *graphdriver, int *graphmode);
graphdriver, graphmode = c_int (), c_int ()
detectgraph (byref (graphdriver), byref (graphmode))
print ("graphdriver, graphmode: ", graphdriver.value, graphmode.value)
```

```

# void getarccoords (struct arccoordstype *arccoords);
ac = arccoordstype ()
getarccoords (byref (ac))
print ("x, y, xstart, ystart, xend, yend: ", ac.x, ac.y,
        ac.xstart, ac.ystart, ac.xend, ac.yend)

# void getaspectratio (int *xasp, int *yasp);
xasp, yasp = c_int (), c_int ()
getaspectratio (byref (xasp), byref (yasp))
print ("xasp, yasp: ", xasp.value, yasp.value)

# void getfillsettings (struct fillsettingstype *fillinfo);
fillinfo = fillsettingstype ()
getfillsettings (byref (fillinfo))
print ("pattern, color: ", fillinfo.pattern, fillinfo.color)

# void getimage ()
isize = imagesize (0, 0, len, 16)
image = create_string_buffer (isize)
getimage (0, 0, len, 16, image)

# void getlinesettings (struct linesettingstype *lineinfo);
lineinfo = linesettingstype ()
getlinesettings (byref (lineinfo))
print ("linestyle, thickness: ", ls.linestyle, ls.thickness)

# void getmoderange (int graphdriver, int *lomode, int *himode);
lomode, himode = c_int (), c_int ()
getmoderange (0, byref (lomode), byref (himode))
print ("lomode, himode: ", lomode.value, lomode.value)

# void getmouseclick (int btn, int *x, int *y);
kind, x, y = c_int (), c_int (), c_int ()
getmouseclick (kind, byref (x), byref (y))
print ("mouse x, mouse y: ", x.value, y.value)

# void getscreensize (int x, int y);
x, y = c_int (), c_int ()
getscreensize (byref (x), byref (y))
print ("size x, size y: ", x, y)

```

Pythonic Syntax

The following functions provide a more Pythonic syntax that only uses standard Python types:

```

# void detectgraph (int *graphdriver, int *graphmode);
graphdriver, graphmode = detectgraph ()
print ("graphdriver, graphmode: ", graphdriver, graphmode);

```

```

# void getarccoords (struct arccoordstype *arccoords);
ac = arccoordstype ()
ac = getarccoords ()
print ("x, y, xstart, ystart, xend, yend: ", ac.x, ac.y,
      ac.xstart, ac.ystart, ac.xend, ac.yend)

# void getaspectratio (int *xasp, int *yasp);
xasp, yasp = getaspectratio ()
print ("xasp, yasp: ", xasp, yasp)

# void getfillsettings (struct fillsettingstype *fillinfo);
fs = fillsettingstype ()
fs = getfillsettings ()
print ("pattern, color: ", fs.pattern, fs.color)

# void getlinesettings (struct linesettingstype *lineinfo);
ls = linesettingstype ()
ls = getlinesettings ()
print ("linestyle, thickness: ", ls.linestyle, ls.thickness)

# void getmoderange (int graphdriver, int *lomode, int *himode);
lomode, himode = getmoderange ()
print ("lomode, himode: ", lomode, lomode)

# void getmouseclick (int btn, int *x, int *y);
x, y = getmouseclick (WM_LBUTTONDOWN)
print ("mouse x, mouse y: ", x, y)

# void getscreensize (int x, int y);
x, y = getscreensize ()
print ("size x, size y: ", x, y)

# void initgraph (int *graphdriver, int *graphmode, char *pathtodriver)
initgraph ()

```

Helper Functions

The following functions can be useful:

`list2vec (list)`: converts a Python list of integers to a vector; used for example by `drawpoly()`

`vec2buf (vector)`: returns a string buffer that contains the values stored in vector. This is a 1-dimensional array that can be obtained from a Numpy 2D array 'matrix' with `reshape (matrix, -1)`.

`sizeofint ()`: equivalent to C `sizeof (int)`. Please note that this is not the same as `sys.getsizeof()`!

Missing Features

SDL2-based variables `bgi_window`, `bgi_renderer`, `bgi_texture`, `PALETTE_SIZE`, and function `copysurface()` are not available.

Speeding Things Up

Python is an interpreted language, and its performance is quite poor if compared to compiled code. The [PyPy](#) interpreter should make Python code run faster, but `SDL_bgi` programs run much slower with PyPy than with CPython. Another Python implementation, [Pyston](#), actually runs `SDL_bgi` programs definitely faster than CPython.

To give your programs a real boost, I strongly suggest that module [Numba](#) be used. Numba is a high performance Python JIT compiler that can translate a large subset of Python and NumPy code into fast machine code. It uses simple function decorators; please have a look at `demo/mandelbrot.py` to see how it works.

Making Standalone Binaries

To deploy a Python program as a standalone executable file, you may use [PyInstaller](#) or [Nuitka](#).

Pyinstaller

Run it as in the following example:

```
test$ pyinstaller -F fern.py
121 INFO: PyInstaller: 5.4.1
121 INFO: Python: 3.10.4
...
7373 INFO: Building EXE from EXE-00.toc completed successfully.
test$ _
```

The resulting executable will be created in directory `dist/`.

Nuitka

Run it as in the following example:

```
test$ nuitka3 --onefile --remove-output fern.py
Nuitka-Options:INFO: Used command line options: --onefile \
  --remove-output fern.py
Nuitka:INFO: Starting Python compilation with Nuitka '1.1.3' \
  on Python '3.10' commercial grade 'not installed'.
...
Nuitka:INFO: Successfully created 'fern.bin'.
test$ _
```

When run on Windows, you get `fern.exe` and `fern.cmd`, which is a batch file that sets up the proper runtime environment for the executable. Run `fern.cmd` to start the program; on MSYS2, use:

```
test$ start fern.cmd
```

On my GNU/Linux Mint 20.2 box, Nuitka creates a much smaller executable than Pyinstaller does.